

ON THE CULTURE CONCEPT

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INTRODUCTION

The culture concept has been called one of the most important, if not the most important, concept in the social sciences today. Such learned men as Harry Elmer Barnes, Stuart Chase, Ralph Linton, Melville Herskovits, and Clark Wissler have been influenced by it. Men for centuries have theorized about the societal forces which influenced them. They have wondered, also, how their personalities came to be what they were, and they have had many explanations for why things were as they were. One of the earliest of these was that of magic; another, going hand in hand with the first, was evil spirits; and there were numerous others. Especially prominent theories were founded on the Economic Man and the Natural Man. The first of these was prompted by purely material causes; the latter, by his instincts.¹

Travelers, upon returning to their own countries, would bring strange tales of customs entirely different from those which existed in their homelands, but these differences were held to be caused by the unlike biological make-up, so they in no way affected the theories. Although the word "culture" was used in connection with the ways of life of primitive tribes, it was not until 1876 that the distinctive nature of "culture" was pointed out.²

In that year, Herbert Spencer, extending Comte's division of the organic and inorganic to include a category of "super-organic" took notice of the separateness of social phenomena from other types of

1 Stuart Chase, The Proper Study of Mankind, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1945, p.59.

2 Clarence Marsh Case, Outlines of Introductory Sociology, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1924, p. 29.

phenomena. Since that time the concept of the superorganic or culture has been in the process of formulation. There is now some consensus of opinion about the use of the term.¹ Today it implies a complex of many characteristics of which the super-organic aspect is only one. There has been an integration of many of the opposing views concerning it. The evolutionists and the diffusionists, the functionalists and the survivalists, the psychological culturists and the cultural determinists have all added something to the knowledge about culture.

There still exist fields of disputation, however. Such a field is the disagreement over the inclusion of both material and non-material traits in the content of culture. There is also disagreement about the spread of culture, and about the relation of some personality traits to their cultural setting. The knowledge of more ways in which culture may be studied objectively is needed, as is more knowledge concerning the interdependence of the social sciences as a whole. It is to be hoped such knowledge will not be long in coming.

And now let us turn our attention to the following aspects of the concept: (1) What is the culture concept, (2) How did it develop, (3) What are some of the devices employed in the objective study of culture, and (4) What are some of the ways in which this concept has influenced the social sciences?

1 Ralph Linton, The Cultural Background of Personality, New York, D'Appleton-Century Company, 1945, p. 31.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

One of the most frequently quoted definitions of culture is that of E. B. Tylor who says "Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."¹

Ralph Linton says "A culture is the configuration of learned behavior and results of behavior whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society."² Constantine Panunzio approaches culture from its institutional aspect. He says, ". . . Culture is simply the sum of the institutions . . . the complex whole of the institutions as these prevail in a given time or in a given place."³ He regrets Tylor's choice of the words "capabilities" and "habits" as he says,

"Man's capacities are endowments of nature; they are factors in culture formation but not in themselves part of culture. Likewise habits are individual modes of action which may or may not be part of culture."⁴

John Gillin believes that only the non-material or ideational is culture. He denies that such material culture traits as a hammer should be included. Since the pattern of how a hammer is made, how and for what it is used, all exist in the mind, the hammer, itself, says Gillin, is of no importance. Only the pattern should be considered.⁵

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- 1 Edward B. Tylor, Primitive Culture,
New York, Brentano's, 1924, p. 1.
 - 2 Linton, op. cit., p. 32.
 - 3 Constantine Panunzio, Major Social Institutions,
New York, MacMillan Co., 1939, p. 26.
 - 4 Ibid., p. 106.
 - 5 John Gillin, The Ways of Men,
New York, D'Appleton-Century Company, 1948, p. 188.

Ellwood in his definition of culture takes achievements as the essence of culture. He emphasizes socially acquired behavior patterns--all that is learned through inter-communication by means of symbols. But he says,

"... the essential part of culture is to be found in the patterns embodied in the social traditions of the group--that is, in knowledge, ideas, beliefs, values, standards and sentiments prevalent in the group."¹

These relate to the subjective side of culture and are "its essential core." The overt culture of a group consists of its usages, customs and institutions which "are nearly always the expressions of the ideas, beliefs, values, and sentiments of the group." Ellwood, then, as does Panunzio, believes that it is the pattern which exists in the mind that is important. Linton finds that in investigating the covert culture, however, there is much subjective judgment involved, and that "it is the overt aspect of culture which is the principal agent in culture transmission."² He makes an interesting distinction between the real culture, the culture construct pattern--which involves a cultural norm, and the ideal culture--or the culture as it exists in its ideals.

A culture, then, is both covert and overt, material and non-material. It includes all of a society's heritage which has been externally transmitted--all of its arts, technics, beliefs, customs, and any knowledge which man acquires as a member of society. It is the sum of his insti-

1 Charles A. Ellwood, "Culture", in Dictionary of Sociology, edited by Henry Pratt Fairchild, New York, Philosophical Library, 1944, p. 80.

2 Linton, op. cit., pp. 39-41.

tutions and of his roles. It is that part of his atmosphere which is manmade. It plays an intimate part in his life. It is his religion, his job, his recreation, his role in the family of which he is a part. It enters his life before he is born through the way in which his mother prepares for his coming and it is never separate from him afterward. It is no aspersion on primitive man's mentality that he was unable to see the part culture played in his life. It was accepted as naturally as the air he breathed.

Panunzio lists the characteristics of culture as (1) super-organic, (2) dynamic and self-generating, (3) of a pattern creating order, (4) objective, (5) humanly useful, (6) cumulative, (7) self-perpetuating. By superorganic, he means that culture is manmade; by spontaneous or self-generating, that it arises without preconceived plans, but through experience in satisfying needs; by dynamic, that it is always in flux and in a reciprocating relation with man; by pattern-creating order, that in a culture the significant thing is not a specific object but the pattern of how that object is made and used; by objective, that culture refers to a way of life as it exists in a given time and place; by humanly useful, that it is a result of man's attempt to adjust in the most satisfying way to his environment in relation to his basic needs; by cumulative and self-perpetuating, that culture is an ever-increasing social heritage that is passed from one generation to another, and from one people to another.¹

Culture is cohesive. It binds a group of persons together. It preserves the society, although the ideals it instills in the individuals who compose a society are often antagonistic to their personal

¹ Panunzio, op. cit., p. 23.

well-being, as for example, when men are taught to die for their country.¹ It does this by giving individuals a common aim and making for coherence in their goals. It makes their actions intelligible to one another. Without culture a group of persons would be only a mob and among them there would be all the confusion of "a tower of Babel" with as disastrous results.

"A people's culture is the sum of all the patterns of behavior, impressed from the cradle, which keep the group from flying into a thousand fragments and help it adapt to nature and survive in its environment."²

Culture is a time and energy saver. Without the guide to behavior which it gives, each new problem would be something to be puzzled over. Men would spend a much larger percentage of their time in thinking than they do now with a consequently greater expenditure of energy for as Sumner stated,

"Custom regulates the whole of a man's actions,--his bathing, washing, cutting his hair, eating, drinking, and fasting. From his cradle to his grave he is the slave of ancient usage."³

In short, without culture, man would not be man, but merely a slightly higher species of vertebrate.

Culture is, then, that phenomenon which, though manmade, is itself one of the most important differentiating factors between the behavior of men and that of animals.

1 Linton, op. cit., p. 23.

2 Chase, op. cit., p. 62.

3 William Graham Sumner, Folkways, Boston, Ginn and Company, 1906, p. 4.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURE CONCEPT

Although since the time of Aristotle men had noticed the powerful influence of their social environment, it was not until 1876 that the "super-organic" nature of social phenomena was recognized. In that year, Herbert Spencer extended Comte's classification of organic and inorganic to include a third type of evolution, super-organic evolution. Spencer explained his choice of these categories as an attempt to differentiate between the non-protoplasmic matter found on the earth, that matter which had life, and a third great body, not so much of matter as of products of social interaction.

In determining which species possessed this last type of evolution, Spencer first analyzed the behavior of the so-called social insects--the ants and the bees. These insects did not possess the true super-organic, he concluded, in as much as their cooperation is a result of inborn qualities much as differences in sex are, with the same parents producing off-spring with widely assorted functions. Rudiments of the true super-organic were seen only, Spencer said, in members of the higher vertebrates, such as rooks, who kept together in families for generations, drove off strangers, and had some division of labor.

"Clearly there has been reached a co-operation comparable in degree to that shown us by those small assemblages of the lowest human beings, in which there exist no governments."¹

¹ Herbert Spencer, Synthetic Philosophy, VI, "The Principles of Sociology", I, New York, D'Appleton & Company, 1883, p. 7.

He determined that those animals which achieved some degree of co-operation, division of labor, and social interaction and did not have common parentage, did possess some measure of super-organic evolution, but

"... having observed thus much, we may henceforth restrict ourselves to that form of Super-organic Evolution which so immensely transcends all others in extent, in complication, in importance as to make them relatively insignificant--almost too insignificant to be named at the same time. I refer, of course, to the form of it which human societies exhibit in their growths, structures, functions, products."¹

The forces acting on a species, he classified as extrinsic and intrinsic. The extrinsic forces included such things as climate, plants, and animals of the environing region. The intrinsic forces included emotional characteristics, intelligence and tendencies of thought which were peculiar to man. From these original sets of factors, were derived secondary ones. First, the environment was modified by man--forests were cleared, swamplands drained, and domesticated plants and animals produced in increasing quantities; species harmful to man were exterminated. All of these changes meant the difference between "a wolf-haunted forest or a boggy moor peopled with wild birds, and the fields covered with crops and flocks which eventually occupy the same areas," and as such they greatly affected social change.

The increasing size of the social unit itself was an important secondary factor. It made division of labor possible and necessitated more elaboration of government and industry which in turn fostered activities which were only possible when there were large masses of

1 Ibid., p. 8.

labor available. Spencer listed the reciprocal influence of a society and its parts as another factor. Two of the derivative factors he considered as most important, however, were "the influence of the super-organic environment--the action and reaction between a society and neighboring societies" and "that accumulation of super-organic products which we commonly distinguish as artificial, but which, philosophically considered, are no less natural than all others resulting from evolution." The orders of these were (1) Material appliances--from flints to complex automatic tools, (2) Language--both in its spoken and written forms, (3) Knowledge--culminating in science, (4) Customs--which as they became more fixed, ended in systems of laws including those of religion, and (5) Aesthetic products. He concluded,

"All these various orders of super-organic products, each evolving within itself new genera and species while daily growing into a larger whole, and each acting upon the other orders while reacted upon by them, form together an immensely-voluminous, immensely-complicated and immensely-powerful set of influences. During social evolution these influences are ever modifying individuals and modifying society, while being modified by both. They gradually form what we consider either as a non-vital part of the society itself, or else as an additional environment, which eventually becomes even more important than the original environments--so much more important that there arises the possibility of carrying on a high type of social life under inorganic and organic conditions which originally would have prevented it."¹

Spencer, in spite of his coinage of the term, did not fully realize the import of the super-organic.² "He did not conceive of human society as holding a specific content that is non-organic."

1 Ibid., p. 15.

2 A. L. Kroeber, "The Superorganic", American Anthropologist, n.s., XXIX, April-June, 1917, pp. 187-188.

He dwelt extensively on the inferior mental development of primitive tribes, and on the relation of man to his geographical setting. His belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics further confused the issue.

The movement toward cultural objectivity was founded more upon Durkheim's works than upon those of Spencer. Durkheim conceived of social facts as "things" and insisted upon the externality and objectivity of social and cultural determinants.¹ Ten years after the appearance of the concept of the super-organic in Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy, Durkheim's On the Division of Labor in Society was published. In this book he set forth his concept of the Collective Conscience. He has been accused of a supernatural approach and his concept has been likened to Le Bon's group mind. The Collective Conscience, however, bears many striking resemblances to Herbert Spencer's Super-organic, and even more to our present day Culture Concept. Durkheim said of the Common or Collective Conscience,

"The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it the collective or common conscience. No doubt it has not a specific organ as a substratum; it is, by definition, diffuse in every reach of society. Nevertheless, it has specific characteristics which make it a distinct reality. It is, in effect, independent of the particular conditions in which individuals are placed; they pass on and it remains."²

1 A. A. Goldenweiser, "Cultural Anthropology" from The History and Prospects of the Social Sciences, by Harry Elmer Barnes et al, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1925, p. 249.

2 Durkheim, On the Division of Labor in Society, translated by George Simpson, New York, MacMillan Company, 1933, p. 79.

and then,

"It is the same in the North and in the South, in great cities and in small, in different professions."¹

It will be noted that, in reference to the above quotation, Durkheim is using the collective conscience as it applies to "average citizens of the same society" so the term would cover a rather restricted geographic area and would not be meant universally the same, but could refer to the ethos of a country. Some basis for the criticism of supernatural implications may be seen in the following, however:

"It is the psychical type of society, a type which has its properties, its conditions of existence, its mode of development, just as individual types, although in a different way."²

Shadows of the culture concept of today are also seen in the work of Ludwig Gumplowicz who stressed that society did not develop like a biological organism "but from one social phenomenon to another." His statement that "intellects of the same general range of power have replaced the accumulations of earlier generations" anticipated the accumulative aspect of culture.³

It was not until 1915 that the principles upon which the study of culture was based were set forth in a pointed article, "Eighteen Professions" by A. L. Kroeber, who was attempting to delimit the scope of history (historical anthropology, history, and sociology) from science. Kroeber's professions included the following:

"The material studied by history is not man but his work."

1 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

2 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

3 Ludwig Gumplowicz, Outlines of Sociology, translated by Frederick W. Moore, Philadelphia, American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1899, p. 19.

"Civilization, though carried by men and existing through them, is an entity in itself, and of another order from life."

"A certain mental constitution of man must be assumed by the historian, but may not be used by him as a resolution of social phenomena."

"True instincts lie at the bottom and origins of social phenomena but cannot be considered or dealt with by history."

and in the fourteenth premise he refuted the concept of the "group-mind," the "folk-soul" and other such approaches to the problem of "collective consciousness."

"There is no ethnic mind, but only civilization."¹

Kroeber developed these ideas further in an article, "The Super-organic" which appeared in the American Anthropologist two years later. This article became the most widely known statement in support of the independence of social phenomena, and evoked much comment among leading anthropologists of the time.² The article was an answer to writers who attributed the achievements of civilization to a more highly evolved mentality than primitive tribes had and to those who attempted to explain cultural phenomena in terms of man's original nature.³ In it was set forth a philosophy of cultural determinism which saw the cause of social phenomena in other social phenomena. Its author believed the current confusion between the organic and social was due to the revolution in ideas occasioned by the doctrine of evolution which men were still assimilating. This idea had caused such a change

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- 1 A. L. Kroeber, "Eighteen Professions," American Anthropologist, n.s., XXVII, April-June, 1915, pp. 283-284.
 - 2 Dorothy P. Gary, "The Developing Study of Culture" from Trends in American Sociology by George A. Lundberg, Read Bain, Nels Anderson, New York, Harper Brothers Publishers, 1929, p. 188.
 - 3 E. Sapir, "Do We Need a 'Superorganic'?" American Anthropologist, n.s., XXIX, July-September, 1917, p. 441.

in thoughts that even scholars went to extremes in attributing the evolutionary process to all sorts of phenomena.¹

Kroeber admitted, as common knowledge, that all persons acquired some things through heredity while they acquired others through society. However, "No one has yet been found to assert that any human being is born with inherent knowledge of the multiplication table" Although this was true, he said, the origins of some qualities were still undetermined. The processes of biological development and cultural development differed, he found. This differentiation had been too often ignored.²

They differed, first in that biological evolution was characterized by a change in the organism. For example, the first bird was enabled to fly by the development of wings--a modification of its biological nature--while changes in culture took place through invention without any discernible effect on man's constitutional nature. The pilot of today is the same constitutionally as were his predecessors who could not fly. Secondly, biological evolution was inseparably connected with hereditary processes, while cultural evolution occurred apart from this process. No individual ever passed on modifications of the species to his own parent, Kroeber said, but many inventors had passed on modifications of the social environment to theirs. Third, as to the argument that the difference between man and animals lay in our more highly developed mentality and our capacity to modify our environment and so "rise superior to such lowly needs", he said,

1 A. L. Kroeber, "The Superorganic", p. 164.

2 Ibid., p. 191.

"... the distinction between animal and man which counts is not that of the physical and mental, which is one of relative degree, but that of the organic and social, which is one of kind. The beast has mentality, and we have bodies; but in civilization man has something that no animal has."¹

and he continued, using language as an example of the effect of non-inherited and inherited factors,

"To deny that something purely animal underlies human speech, is fatuous; but it would be equally narrow to believe that because our speech springs from an animal foundation, and originated in this foundation, it, therefore, is nothing but animal mentality and utterances greatly magnified... human and animal speech, then, though one roots in the other, are in their nature of a different order. They resemble each other only as the flight of a bird and of an aeronaut are alike."²

As illustration of this dependence of speech upon something more than heredity, Kroeber cited cases from Herodotus' works, in which infants, upon being separated from other people by an experimenting emperor, were as "dumb as deaf mutes" on being returned to the society of people many years later. Another case he presented to refute the argument of "high and low degree" was that of the beaver, who was a much better architect than were many primitive peoples. The difference lay, then, not in degree, but in that the beaver's accomplishments were a result of instinct while men's were a result of tradition. The animal's instincts were unalterable; they possessed them at birth and nothing could change them. Our

1 Ibid., p. 169.

2 Ibid., p. 175.

accomplishments were a result of a tradition which was handed along, from person to person only as a message. It had to be carried, but the messenger was extraneous to the news.¹

There were those who fondly cherished the belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics as the only hope in civilization, Kroeber found. Ward, in particular, argued that since man did not evolutionize by natural selection, he had to by the accumulation of mental qualities which were fixed in him by heredity. To this Kroeber answered that it hobbled development just as much or more by chaining the development of the future to the present.²

What Kroeber did not see was that this "weakness" was also found in the idea of causation of social phenomena by other social phenomena. There could be no tremendous leap over a gap of knowledge, as there could be no leap, as he assumed, over a gap in heredity, but both had to be built on the past. The rate of change was not necessarily so gradual when it was assumed to occur through modifications of social phenomena, however, as the time limit was not rigidly pre-fixed, as in the case of biological accumulations, by the small amount which each generation could accumulate and the fairly constant life-span of man; there could be no speeding up of the processes of heredity for maturation had to occur.

The eugenicists, namely Galton and Pearson, had failed to distinguish between the social and mental, also. Two years before Kroeber wrote "The Superorganic", Pearson had published a study of "Some Recent Misinterpretations of the Problem of Nurture and Nature", in which he

1 Ibid., p. 177-178.

2 Ibid., p. 187.

followed a line of reasoning, similar in many respects, to that of Spencer. Where Spencer said that the more backward tribes of peoples lived in inferior physical environments because they had been forced out of areas more favorable to man by superior tribes,¹ Pearson said that parents of poorer health and habits naturally gravitated to poorer sections of the city by a process of selection in which they lost out to the more able.² It might be said that both these men were reasoning by assuming that correlated features were due to cause-and-effect. Kroeber did not deny that heredity played as much importance in the inheritance of mental traits as it did in that of physical ones, but said that these two were inseparable. The fault lay, though, he felt, in the acceptance of accomplishment as a measure for the limits set by inherited capacities.³ He sums up the point made by those who believe mentality and psychio cultural phenomena are two separate things:

"The reason why mental heredity has nothing to do with civilization, is that civilization is not mental action but a body or stream of products of mental exercise. Mental activity, as biologists have dealt with it, being organic, any demonstration concerning it consequently proves nothing whatever as to social events. Mentality relates to the individual. The social or cultural, on the other hand, is in its very essence non-individual. Civilization, as such, begins only where the individual ends; and whoever does not in

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- 1 Frank Hamilton Hankins, "Sociology", from The History and Prospects of the Social Sciences, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1925, p. 299.
 - 2 Karl Pearson, The Relative Strength of Nurture and Nature, II, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1915, p. 56.
 - 3 A. L. Kroeber, "The Superorganic", pp. 188-189.

some measure perceive this fact, though as a brute and rootless one, can find no meaning in civilization, and history for him is a wearying jumble, or an opportunity for the exercise of art."¹

The biologist takes the individual as his study, but the isolated individual is not the unit from which to study society. A society is composed of much more than a large group of individuals. The Darwinian theory of evolution was formulated on the basis of the race as it related to a collection of individuals. The Mendelian methods of study depended upon the isolating of traits and individuals. Darwin's and Mendel's discoveries could be accepted without reservation as to heredity, both mental and physical, but should not be used in the prediction of human behavior. Kroeber also believed it was futile to attempt to prophesy the future of nations from analyzing the organic make-up of their members.²

Next he turned to the "great man" concept of history. He denied that such men as Aristotle, Archimedes, Darwin, and Mendel contributed achievements which would not have been made if they had died in infancy. While he agreed that all inventors had probably been unusually gifted men, he said, that, since there was usually the same distribution of ability in the world at any given time, great discoveries were determined not by the peculiar capacity of any one man to determine a given theory, but by the readiness of civilization for that theory, because, the discoveries upon which it was based had to be made beforehand and a public had to be ready to receive the invention and utilize it.

1 Ibid., pp. 192-193.

2 Ibid., p. 193.

For that reason, Plato, born into the Stone Age, would not have written the Republic; pistons and valves had to be invented before the steam engine; and a discovery such as Mendel's was ignored during his lifetime only to be discovered later and almost simultaneously by three scientists, when the civilization was ready to make use of it and incorporate it into the culture of the time. These statements are, today, so obvious as to seem unnecessary, but he was criticized for the "cultural determinism" seen in this and the following excerpt:

"When we cease to look upon invention or discovery as some mysterious inherent faculty of individual minds which are randomly dropped in space and time by fate . . . when, in short, interest shifts from individually biographic elements, . . . and attaches whole heartedly to the social, evidence on this point will be infinite in quantity, and the presence of a majestic order pervading civilization will be irresistibly evident."¹

and,

"Knowing the civilization of an age and a land, we can then substantially affirm that its distinctive discoveries, in this or that field of activity, were not directly contingent upon the personality of the actual inventors that graced the period, but would have been made without them; and that, conversely, had the great illuminating minds of other centuries and climates been born in the civilization referred to, instead of their own, its first achievements would have fallen to their lot."²

Social evolution began long after the beginning of organic evolution, even after the primates evolved. Although it was not known

1 Ibid., p. 200.

2 Ibid., p. 201.

exactly when this occurred it was in a series of forms more advanced than the gorilla but less developed than the Neanderthal man. It coincided with the missing link, said Kroeber, but this term did not give its full significance. "Link" implied a chain of evolution-- something steady and continuing. The development of super-organic evolution from organic evolution was no continuous chain of happenings any more than was the development of organic evolution from in-organic evolution but was a leap to another plane. It was the entrance of a new factor, which at first seemed inconsequential, but slowly and increasingly gained in dignity. It was

". . . a factor that had passed beyond natural selection, that was no longer wholly dependent on any agency of organic evolution, and that, however rocked and swayed by the oscillations of the heredity that underlay it, nevertheless floated unimmersibly upon it."¹

In conclusion, Kroeber, drawing on the "eternal chasm" between organic life and the super-organic emphasized the hopelessness of utilizing the methods of mechanistic science in the study of what to him was not science. In stating this, he in no way challenged the methodology of science, but believed, while useful in its own branches of knowledge it would only lead to confusion in those of the histories, as he classed all social sciences. It was his concept of the separateness of social phenomena, however, which was to be the foundation upon which later students extended the scientific methods of research into the social sciences.²

1 Ibid., p. 209.

2 Gary, op. cit., p. 188.

Following the appearance of this highly significant and controversial article in the Anthropologist, there were several rebuttals. Sapir and Goldenweiser each responded to Kroeber's conclusions in the next issue, agreeing with some of his statements and disagreeing with others.

Sapir felt that Kroeber underestimated the importance of individuals in history. That while most individuals were so impressed by the culture in which they lived and could only make a small dent in it, such men as Aristotle, Mahomet, Jesus, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Beethoven had not been mere "cat's-paws" of general cultural drift. Although, much of what these names meant might have been due to biased accounts of their lives, and much of what they did, to their social environments, it was not entirely so. In addition, Sapir thought the classes of phenomena should be in-organic, organic, and mental or psychic--not in-organic, organic, and super-organic. The chasm came, he said, between the organic and the mental which Kroeber had paired together. The development of civilization was due, in his estimation, to the capacity of the human mind to accumulate knowledge, to a growth in self-consciousness on the part of men, and to the ability to select some of the total content of phenomena for his use. This being so, the psychic was relegated to the conceptual sciences, rather than to those which took their data from reality.¹

Goldenweiser disagreed on three points. First, there was an "inadequate appreciation of the role of the individual in history." Second, Kroeber had been "over-confident in his assumption of historic deter-

1 Sapir, op. cit., p. 443.

minism." Third, the identification of psychology and biology were "theoretically inadmissible." He felt that although a theory of cultural determinism might have been applicable for civilizations at large, it would not apply to a given civilization. He agreed that mass phenomena and the law of probability did apply so that with a large number of inventors concentrating on one invention, it was likely to be invented, but this same invention might be made when there was low probability if an exceptional mind attempted it. Finally, he emphasized that the study of culture should be considered as a closed stream and the individuals composing it studied, since they were affected, not only by the civilization, but by their biological and psychological characteristics; as such, they were fed by the stream of culture and fed it in return.¹

In 1947, the questions raised by Kroeber, Sapir, and Goldenweiser were still open ones for Melville Herskovits, after analyzing both sides of the issue, could choose neither wholly the one, nor wholly the other, and was forced to say,

"Must we choose between the view that culture is an entity in its own right, moving irrespective of man, and the one that holds that culture is but a manifestation of the human psyche? Or is it possible to reconcile these two points of view?"²

For the one, that culture should be considered in its own right, he pointed out that the line of history was so smooth and so unbroken when

1 Alexander Goldenweisser, "The Autonomy of the Social", American Anthropologist, XXIX, July-September, 1917, p. 449.

2 Melville J. Herskovits, Man and His Works, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1948, p. 27.

considered in the long view that it did make the role of the individual seem slight, but then again, it could be said that, after all, culture was the aggregate of many patterned reactions--responses made by individuals, as a result of individuals reacting, thinking, rationalizing. The sum total of all these discrete reactions he called their "culture." Finally, he compromised. It was all right to consider culture a separate entity since this was the only way to "attain an understanding of the range of variation to be found in the types of sanctioned behavior that achieve the ends all men do achieve," but it must be realized that it was only set up for usefulness--that it was only a construct.

"The danger point is reached when we deify similarities in behavior that only result from the similar conditioning of a group of individuals to their common setting, into something that exists outside man, something that is superorganic."¹

It might be said to Herskovits that the connotation which he gives to the term "superorganic" is not the same as that which was originally given to it by Kroeber, that it was never intended as a sort of "group-mind," but perhaps that is "beside the point."

Dorothy P. Gary in her interesting piece, "The Developing Study of Culture," which appeared in 1929,² divided social scientists into three groups; those who held the subjective or individualistic approach to the study of phenomena; those who were not able to accept the "wholly objective conception of cultural phenomena;" and, those who considered "all social objects created and interacting in the (social) process, such as tools, folkways, and mores, social personality, attitudes, and science . . . equally objective." This last group gave a new meaning to the "objective

1 Ibid., p. 28.

2 Gary, op. cit. p. 28.

approach to cultural phenomena." She found that the old break between "subjectivity" and "objectivity" had disappeared and the cultural objectivity which had aroused cries of "cultural determinist" against Kroeber now referred, not to the separateness of culture and the individual, but to the "availability of data for scientific observation, analysis, and verification, while subjectivity referred to the non-availability of the phenomena."¹ The scientists she placed in each group were as follows: Subjectivists--Allport, Freud, and others who approached culture through the individual; Pseudo-objectivists--Goldenweisser, Dixon, Herskovits, Tozzer, Wundt, Ellwood, Wissler, Ogburn, and Willey, who analyzed culture in an environmental-psychological way; and Objectivists--Charles and Mary Beard, Kroeber, Lowie, Cooley, Park, Burgess, and Wallis. She felt the Pseudo-objectivists did not "furnish an adequate basis for a science of culture," and believed that an element of the objectivist approach was found in most of the writings of sociologists and social anthropologists of that time.²

Two books appeared in the 1930's which were to open up new aspects of the culture concept. Ruth Benedict, in Patterns of Culture,³ stressed the subordination of all of the institutions of a tribe to a single integration of aim. In her analysis of the Zuni, Dobuans, and Kwakiutl, she found each tribe selected only a limited section of the wide range of variations which were possible to their society. She was influenced by the Gestalt psychologists and philosophic historians, in that she

1 Ibid., p. 185.

2 Ibid., pp. 175, 178, 185.

3 Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture, Cambridge, The Riverside Press, 1934, passim..

considered, as did Clark Wissler, that the whole society was not just the sum of its parts, but that, more important, these parts were related in a unique arrangement which gave that society its distinctive character.¹ Since the premise that every society inherits the same general range of biological make-up is held axiomatic, any variations in the personalities of a population as a whole, Ruth Benedict felt were due to cultural conditioning. She showed how each of the tribes' members was affected by his cultural setting. The Zuni were friendly, uncompetitive people; there were few examples of individualism in their group. The Dobuans and Kwakiutl, however, were suspicious, competitive, and showed marked individualism in their people. Neuroticism was especially prevalent among the latter. Ruth Benedict concluded, that the causes of psychotic and neurotic states were (1) The conflict of an individual's inherited temperament with the personality pattern accepted by his tribe, and (2) Inability, on the part of an individual, to reach goals set by his society.

Karen Horney, in The Neurotic Personality of Our Time,² also dwelt on the role a culture's goals play in making persons neurotic. In a society such as ours, the extreme competitiveness needed to attain success conflicts with the Christian precepts which form our ideal culture pattern. This, and the creation of desires impossible to satisfy by high pressure salesmanship and advertising, account for much of our neuroticism,

1 Alexander Goldenweiser, "Leading Contributions of Anthropology to Social Theory", Contemporary Social Theory by Harry Elmer Barnes et al, New York, D'Appleton-Century Company, 1940, p. 484.

2 Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Times, New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1937, passim.

since they make for a sense of frustration. A society which results in large numbers of personality casualties, must be sick itself, she concluded.

It is impossible to list, in total, the contributions of the many social scientists who have aided in developing the culture concept.

The foregoing contributions are among the more significant, but the concept itself, is due not only to these contributions, but to every idea which has added something to the understanding of the importance of culture, since the culture concept has developed--as do all social phenomena--through a process of minute inventions heaped upon the pile of knowledge.

SOME DEVICES FOR DEALING WITH CULTURE

With the division of phenomena into the inorganic, the organic, and the superorganic or cultural for practical purposes, the problem of classification of social phenomena was still in its very earliest stage. The amount of data which could be placed under the heading "superorganic" was tremendous. This was particularly true when culture was used in a general sense as meaning all of man's accumulated, externally transmitted, and socially acquired knowledge. The problem was somewhat simplified by the use of the term "culture" to include only those social phenomena of a given time or place, as "the Ancient Greek Culture" or the "Chinese Culture." A student of China, for instance, could then list interesting bits of information to his heart's content--that Chinese women had their feet bound in infancy, that the Chinese had carriages called "rickshas" which were pulled by men, that the Chinese people ate worms. More discriminating observers might see that the Chinese had a patriarchal family system or an ancestral-worshipping religion, but each observer was extremely likely to approach the culture in a more or less haphazard way--selecting that portion of data which seemed to him most significant and often lifting culture items out of their settings in such a way that their importance was lost. Some observers might concentrate on the fact that Chinese women bound their feet to the extent that they did not see how this fitted into the pattern of Chinese culture--that it was tied up with the attitude of physical labor as degrading, or with that of the inferiority and helplessness of women. Nor could they see how the custom had begun, or was dying out because bound feet were becoming more of a hindrance than an asset.

It was very difficult to make valid comparisons between cultures because the data collected about individual societies was often non-comparable; that it was impossible to record everything about even a primitive tribe was obvious, but which portion of the tribe's culture to record was not.

Culture, as other phenomena, in order to be handled objectively and uniformly, had to be classified in such a manner that the incorporation of elements into a culture, the major parts of any culture, the gradation of culture elements from the more simple to the more complex, the impact of the culture upon the society's members, and the malfunctioning of the parts of the culture could be shown. It was with this in mind that several frames of reference were constructed, which, although ambiguous, as Wissler's "culture trait" and "culture complex" were accused of being,¹ had much the same value as a pH scale in chemistry.

One of the first attempts at classification of data resulted in a systemic arrangement of the steps by which new parts of culture developed. This frame of reference was in the book, Folkways, written in 1906 by William Graham Sumner.

A. Sumner's "Folkways"

From a study of extensive data gathered from primitive and civilized societies all over the world, Sumner showed how folkways developed, how they affected human interests, and how they acted and were acted on. First, folkways were defined; ". . . they are not organic,

1 Gary, op. cit., p. 180.

or material," he said, "They belong to a super-organic system of relations, conventions, and institutional arrangements."¹ In their formation there were first the needs which men must satisfy. In attempting to satisfy these needs they chanced upon some ways out of a large range of possibilities which produced greater satisfaction than others, and followed them repeatedly until they became habits. Others of their group, impelled by the same need, also took up these ways of achieving satisfaction. Through repeated group use they became customs. As "instincts" were developed in connection with the mass phenomena the customs changed into folkways. Sumner says of the folkways:

"The folkways, at a time, provide for all the needs of life then and there. They are uniform, universal in the group, imperative, and invariable. As time goes on, the folkways become more and more arbitrary, positive, and imperative. If asked why they act in a certain way in certain cases, primitive people always answer that it is because they and their ancestors always have done so. A sanction also arises from ghost fear."²

He emphasized that folkways were made unconsciously, with their aim only the satisfaction of the need at hand, but that they came to dominate so much of the lives of primitive peoples that it was said that pre-literate men were the "slaves of ancient usage," and modern man was only slightly less so, having "a little wider variation of voluntary action."³

Often these folkways were due to a false conclusion drawn from cause-and-effect reasoning. Such a thing happened when a citizen of

1 Sumner, op. cit., p. iv.

2 Ibid., pp. 2-3.

3 Ibid., p. 4.

Portugal died at Molembo and soon afterwards a pestilence broke out. The natives thought the pestilence due to the white man's death and went to great trouble to prevent another such occurrence. To them this seemed the best possible explanation, and as such they incorporated it into their folkways. Sumner found many cases in contemporary culture in which the folkways were based on no more logical reasoning than that shown in the folkways of the primitives.

When the folkways were evaluated as necessary for the social welfare they became mores and of a compulsive nature.¹ Mores were the unwritten laws which "could make anything right." Sumner cited cases in which horrible punishments were inflicted, public houses of prostitution set up, and the courtship custom of "bundling" carried on--all without any consciousness of wrongness, because it was in the mores of the time and what was wrong, itself, differed from country to country depending upon the mores which the people sanctioned.

"The mores are the folkways including the philosophical and ethical generalizations as to societal welfare which are suggested by them and inherent in them, as they grow."²

There was a consistency among the mores as there was among folkways, because they fulfilled needs best when cooperative. This led persons to generalize and form "principles" upon which they mistakenly assumed people acted and which they considered the causative factors. For example, some of the less common mores caused by changes in the conditions of life were responsible for the humanitarianism in modern society, not the mores due to the principle of humanitarianism.³

1 Ibid., p. 30.

2 Ibid., p. 30.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

Out of the mores came the laws which to be effective had to be based on existent mores. They took the mores out of the unconscious and put a penalty on their observance. In primitive times, taboos took the place of laws; when a stage was reached in which men no longer feared the ghosts of their ancestors too greatly to be critical of folkways, laws were enacted to take the place of the taboos.¹

From the folkways--developed, first, into customs and then into mores--appeared creative institutions such as the family, the government, and religion which were composed of a concept and a structure by which the concept or notion was brought about. When through invention and conscious forethought, specific institutions were established as were banks, they were called "enacted institutions." Behind these also lay, however, a long line of common usages.²

Next came the "ethos" of the group, or, "the totality of characteristic traits by which a group is individualized and differentiated from others." It was the group ethos which led to distrust on the part of the in-group for the out-group, or for "foreigners."³

Sumner's classification then, arranged in order of increasing complexity, is as follows:

- (1) Habits
- (2) Folkways
- (3) Customs
- (4) Mores
- (5) Laws
- (6) Institutions
- (7) Ethos.

1 Ibid., p. 55.

2 Ibid., pp. 53-54.

3 Ibid., pp. 70-71.

The usefulness of this grouping is apparent when one notes that, after over forty years, it is still one of the most widely used approaches to the study of culture.

B. Frames Used by Wissler

The unit Clark Wissler chose for his frame of reference was the tribe and was characterized by political unity, speech uniformity, and geographical continuity. Culture, then was the "aggregate thoughts and deeds of the tribe."¹ The tribal culture was composed of (1) culture traits, and (2) culture complexes.

Culture traits were the small units which when enumerated added up to the whole culture. They were units of observation.² They were not independent objects as were potatoes dumped together in a bushel basket, Wissler specified, but bore a functional relation to one another. When a tribe had the habit of consuming wild rice, for example, there was a fixed cycle of activities to be pursued--the gathering, hulling, and cooking of the rice all involved many distinct culture traits--and when these were all related to one another to carry on a total activity, they became "a trait complex."³ The sum of a society's trait complexes formed the culture.

When all of the cultures of the world were classified according to the similarity of the trait-complexes they contained, they were divided into "culture types." For example, Wissler said, there was a fairly common type of dress which Indian women of the Western United States wore.

1 Clark Wissler, Man and Culture, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company 1923, pp. 48-49.

2 Ibid., p. 50.

3 Ibid., p. 52.

When other culture trait complexes of these Indians were considered and found to vary around a common norm, as did the dress, cultures in which these traits were associated were of a common culture type.

"Hence, by type of culture we mean a norm, or standard form, of tribal culture readily distinguished from others."¹

All types of cultures, Wissler held, to have a common fundamental structure, although they differed in the content which formed this structure. "The same general outline will fit all of them."² This outline he divided into nine culture complexes. As it has been used repeatedly as a guide to the study of primitive cultures, we are including it here.

"The Culture Scheme"³

1. Speech
 - Languages, writing systems, etc.
2. Material Traits
 - a. Food habits
 - b. Shelter
 - c. Transportation and trade.
 - d. Dress
 - e. Utensils, tools, etc.
 - f. Weapons
 - g. Occupations and industries.
3. Art
 - Carving, painting, drawing, music, etc.
4. Mythology and Scientific Knowledge.
5. Religious Practices
 - a. Ritualistic forms
 - b. Treatment of the sick
 - c. Treatment of the dead
6. Family and Social Systems
 - a. The forms of marriage
 - b. Methods of reckoning relationship
 - c. Inheritance
 - d. Social control
 - e. Sports and games

1 Ibid., p. 55.

2 Wissler, op. cit., p. 75.

3 Ibid., p. 74.

7. Property
 - a. Real and personal
 - b. Standards of value and exchange
 - c. Trade
8. Government
 - a. Political forms
 - b. Judicial and legal procedures
9. War.

Even the Australian aborigine, who some said had no culture, fell under this outline. For example, although he did not wear clothes, he did wear ornaments so would be considered as having "dress." When his culture was studied carefully, Wissler believed all of the other trait-complexes would also be found.¹ There were certain activities essential to the survival of humans around which the complexes developed and these needs, common to mankind, resulted in a frame of society which was everywhere the same. There were many ways of solving the needs, however, and the contents which filled in the frame and gave it character differed.

C. Chapin's Type Parts of an Institution

In 1928, F. Stuart Chapin sought to give a cross-sectional view of an institution. Chapin's framework gives a very minute examination of this aspect of culture.

The characteristics of the institution, as Chapin defined it were: first, institutions arose out of grouped individuals who were joined around the satisfaction of some basic need or drive such as sex, hunger, or fear; and second, the "type-parts" of an institution were of four kinds, (1) conventionalized behavior patterns and certain reciprocating attitudes such as affection, loyalty, cooperation, (2) symbolic culture traits to which emotional value was attached and which were stimuli to behavior conditioned to them (the idol, cross, ring or flag.), (3) technical cultural

¹ Ibid., p. 76.

traits invented to make for a more adequate satisfaction of creature wants through better adjustment to the environment (buildings and shelter),

(4) a "heritage" of the "description and specification of the patterns of interrelationship among elemental drives, attitudes, symbolic culture traits, and utilitarian culture traits" which were externally stored and handed on in oral or written language.¹

When he analyzed four great institutions of society, he saw the following distribution of traits:²

Type parts of Structure	Family	State	Religion	Industry
1. Attitudes and behavior patterns	Love Affection Devotion Loyalty Parental-respect	Devotion Loyalty Respect Domination Subordination Fear	Reverence Fear Loyalty Devotion Awe Subordination	Fair play Loyalty Cooperation Conflict Workmanship Thrift
2. Symbolic culture traits	Marriage ring Crest Coat-of-arms Heirloom	Flag Seal Emblem National anthem Army, Navy	Cross Ikon Idol Shrine Altar	Trade mark Patent sign Advertising emblem
3. Utilitarian culture traits	Home equipment Personal property	Public buildings Public works Warlike equipment	Church buildings Cathedral Temple Sanctuary Altar	Stores, shops Factories Ships Railroads Machinery
4. Oral or written specifications	Will Marriage License Genealogy Mores	Treaties Constitution Charter Laws Ordinances Mores	Creed Doctrine Hymn Bible Sacred book	Franchises Licenses Contracts Partnership papers Articles of Incorporation

1 F. Stuart Chapin, Cultural Change, New York, The Century Company, 1928, pp. 45-46.

2 Ibid., p. 49.

All of the preceding characteristics were capable of objective study, Chapin said. Even attitudes had been quantitatively measured.

D. Linton's "Unequal Participation in Culture"

A device especially useful in dealing with the relation of culture to personality was that formulated by Ralph Linton in 1936. Linton accounted for the wide range of variations in society by the inability of any of a group's members to participate in the total culture of the group since the sum of knowledge was too great. Even if for no other reason, differences in sex would cause differences in participation and so each person had roles he must play lying outside the experience of many of his compatriots. This difference in roles and in the section of the culture which affected one was responsible, said Linton, for such things as dissimilarities between classes, between culturally isolated groups and the whole society, and between religious groups.¹ His list of the degrees to which the content of a culture were participated in by the group was as follows:

- (1) Universalities
- (2) Specialties
- (3) Alternatives

The universalities were things which everyone in the group shared, for instance, the dress, language, housing, and group ideals. The specialties affected only part of the group; they were seen where there was a division of labor between the sexes or difference in occupations. In addition there were the alternatives--varieties of approved ways open to individuals for satisfying their needs. Such varieties were seen in amusements, recreations, and hobbies. A fourth classification, sometimes

¹ Ralph Linton, The Study of Man, New York, D'Appleton-Century Company, 1936, p. 277.

added, was that of "Individualities." These were the individualized modes of behavior which everyone possessed to some degree, and it was through the popularization of these eccentricities that new elements were incorporated into the already existent culture.¹

The universalities and the specialties of a society were accepted by the group as "right"; if necessary, they were justified by rationalizations. Since the universalities accentuated things common to the experience of the group and the specialties, the interdependence of the group, they were of a cohesive nature so that a society composed mainly of these was likely to be stable. Alternatives and individualities, introduced new modes of action or ways about which there were conflict and a culture in which they predominated was consequently less stable.²

E. Ogburn's "Cultural Lag"³

In 1922, William F. Ogburn formulated the theory that strain existed between two parts of a culture because of a lag in adjustment between the parts.

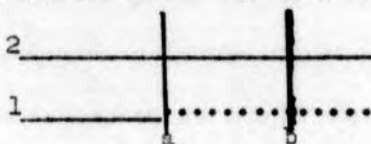
For example, in the early 1800's the United States had a very small population, with huge forests available. The policy pursued by persons then was one of exploitation of the woodlands. There was no attempt at reforestation or conservation. As the population grew, the need for wood grew, but the area in forest lands decreased. As a result of cutting away the trees which held the soil in place and prevented the running-off of water, floods caused a great deal of damage. The process of securing legislation to prevent exploitation

1 Ibid., pp. 272-274.

2 Ibid., pp. 282-283.

3 This device, although not a frame of reference, has been found especially useful in diagnosing social ills.

of the forests was a slow one. It began about 1904 and is still inadequate. Ogburn's diagram of this lag between changed material conditions and adaptive culture was as follows:



Line 1 represented the material conditions in regard to the forests--the increased need for forests, and line 2 represented the adaptive culture--the usage of the forests.

Point "a" represented the need for a change in the adaptive culture, point "b", the occurrence of the change, so that between points a and b there was a maladjustment between the material culture, in this case the independent variable, and adaptive culture, the dependent variable.¹

Lags in parts of culture are created by population changes and social inventions, but the most frequent cause of lags, at present, are the result of technology advancing at a more rapid rate than the social institutions with which it associates.² A very serious lag, today, is due to the increased invention and production of destructive weapons, while the social machinery which would enable us to utilize these technological discoveries in a positive manner, lingers behind.

The "Cultural Lag", together with Sumner's system of folkways, Chapin's "Type Parts of an Institution," and Linton's "Unequal Participation in Culture" give a "jumping-off-place" from which to

1 William Fielding Ogburn, Social Change, New York, The Viking Press, Inc., 1922, pp. 203-213.

2 Ibid., p. 210.

approach the study of culture. They are tangible, applicable to social phenomena as they actually exist at a given time and place, and commonly enough accepted by sociologists and anthropologists to be steps forward in a more thorough approach to the study of culture.

Now that we have looked at the devices themselves let us show how they can be used. One of the more fruitful areas of cultural study is that of our own country. These tools are of great use in analyzing something which we are apt to approach so subjectively. In the study of American culture they furnish a frame work which can give coherence to our research and make for greater objectivity, assuming, first, that we realize that our ways are as much a result of culture as are those of any primitive tribe.

The culture scheme lists nine major parts contained by any culture. We find that we have speech, material traits, art, mythology and scientific knowledge, religious practices, the family and social systems, property, government, and war. Suppose we analyze the food habits of the American people, a subdivision under material traits.

There are folkways and mores in food habits as well as in other areas--we do not eat certain foods--rats, snails, or worms, nor do we eat each other. Snails, for example, might be very good roasted. In some other cultures they are eaten, but we do not. This is not because there is anything inherently bad in snails--it may be that they contain many vitamins, but for most of us they are just not eaten. As for prohibitions against cannibalism, our idea of the wrongness of cannibalism was derived through the accumulations of experience which lie back of our culture, and passed through the stages of habit not to eat people.

folkway not to eat people, custom not to eat people, until finally it was felt degrading to society to such an extent that it became one of our strongest aversions.

Turning to Wissler's culture trait and culture complex--we find that the can-opener is a culture trait. There is an accepted way of using a can-opener--you cut a hole in the top of a can of food which has been preserved by the destruction of food-spoiling bacteria. The pattern of the can-opener with its accompanying pattern of usage and all of the things with which it is involved--the cans of food, the method of cooking, the pattern of disposal of empty cans all go to make up a part of a culture complex--the use of canned foods processed outside of the home.

Cultures which have much the same culture complexes as ours, with some variance, of course, form a culture type to which not only we but the British, French, and other nationalities might belong.

The family is one of the great institutions Chapin lists under his "Type Parts of an Institution." Carrying the analysis of the food habits of a family along under the headings he lists we find there is a distinct behavior pattern surrounding eating. This behavior pattern passes under the name of "table manners." There is a symbolic culture trait in the family initial on silver. Utilitarian culture traits might include plates, silver, napkins or any of the many things associated with eating, or preparing the food. Oral or written specifications could include the recipes or cook books.

The section of culturally acquired ways of eating to which a person is exposed may affect his personality--or be a distinguishing feature by which others of his group recognize him. So that eating according

to a given code may mark him as belonging to a certain class or a given religious group. The varieties of foods he eats may very well affect not only his physical appearance, but his psychical state as well.

And it is here that a lag may be found between changed material conditions and adaptive culture. Sedentary workers do not need as many calories as do more active workers, so that when patterns of eating are not changed as bodily needs are, a lag may occur and result in widespread obesity.

These are some of the ways in which devices for studying culture can be used to give more objectivity, more accuracy, and a more valid approach than we formerly had, and because of the interrelationship of the social sciences more precise studies in anthropology or sociology will have some effect on other fields.

SOME APPLICATIONS OF THE CULTURE COMPLEX

We have attempted to show something of the nature of the culture concept, how it developed, what methods are used to study it, and what some of the influences are upon the social sciences in general.

There can be no doubt that it opens up bright new vistas in the application of the scientific method in the social sciences. As Stuart Chase says, "The culture concept gives us the closest fit to the truth about mankind yet discovered by the scientific method . . ."¹

We will not attempt to discuss fully the influences which the concept of the cultural anthropologists has had on the social sciences. There have been four general ways in which they have influenced the other disciplines, however. They have led to an increasing recognition of the synthetic aspect of the social institutions and consequently of the social sciences; they have helped to bring out the effect which a culture has upon the personalities of its members; they have aided in supplying a more objective approach to the study of social phenomena and toward the solution of problems of society; and, they have furnished data on primitive tribes which has given us a better perspective on our own society.²

The definition of culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society,"³ helps to bring into focus the fact that society is not built on any given segment of a man.

1 Chase, op. cit., p. 65.

2 Ibid., pp. 59-60.

3 Tylor, op. cit., p. 1.

It emphasizes that society is not just the study of man's government, religion, state, or ethics, but is the totality of these things in relation to one another. Ogburn's demonstration of how a change in one part of culture affects other parts of it brings into relief something which, although recognized, economists, students of religion and government, judges, anthropologists, ethnologists, and social psychologists frequently ignore. Too often each branch of knowledge has been so preoccupied with formulating laws which would cover man's behavior in its own field, that it has completely overlooked the fact, that, after all, a man is not merely concerned with his job, his family, his religion, his government or any of the other parts of the culture in which he participates, but with all of these at the same time, and that a situation in any one of these may affect his behavior in the others.¹ That a man's business troubles can make him grouchy at home is too commonly accepted to be questioned, as is the role of government in setting limits to his practices in almost any facet of his life; he is not allowed, for instance, to fondle snakes in his religious rites nor to punish his child too severely. This complexity in a single man's life, becomes even greater when man is studied in groups. No single facet of a society's behavior can be separated from the other parts.

Scientists have from time to time felt this synthesis of human relations so important that they have advocated the setting up of a special overall science, which, while not neglecting or attempting to replace the specialized branches, would give a broader basis for study.

¹ Chase, op. cit., p. 199.

Ralph Linton says,

"Out of the collaboration of such workers (workers in the fields of Personality Psychology, Social Structure, and Cultural Anthropology), there is beginning to emerge a new science devoted to the dynamics of human behavior."¹

This may or may not be necessary. With the increasing cooperation of the social sciences there is likely to be an enrichment of all the fields by ideas which have penetrated from the others. This is not to say that social scientists in the past have not cooperated and borrowed from each other's discoveries, for they have; the nature of their study would make it impossible for them to totally ignore all fields but their own, but it is also too true that they have not cooperated actively, and have spent far too large a part of their time in sniping at each others discoveries.²

In studying the effect which a culture has upon the personality of its members, there are two different approaches. The first is to study the sociogenic in relation to the genic characteristics of persons to find which traits are inherited and which are not, then the full extent of the culture's influence upon the individual can be seen. The students of culture have aided in disproving the existence of many so-called "instincts"--traits which were held to be common to all members of the human species, such as the acquisitive instinct and the combative instinct were supposed to be, or, traits which were held to be due to the individual's endowment by his parents, such as instinctive

1 Linton, op. cit., p. xiv.

2 William F. Ogburn and Alexander Goldenweiser, The Social Sciences. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927, pp. 5-6.

lying, or instinctive laziness.¹ It may be remembered that it was partly the excessive use of "instincts" as an explanation for human behavior which led Kroeber to write "The Superorganic." While they have not been so active as the psychologists in disproving the presence of non-universal instincts such as some believe to be inherited by offspring, they have, through analysis of social phenomena, made such a good case for culturally conditioned responses as the cause of human actions that the "instincts" have lost some of their potency.²

The second approach to the study of human personality in relation to culture is the configurative approach. Ruth Benedict's book, Patterns of Culture is the classic in this field. It is an analysis of the ways in which a specific type of culture operates to produce the personality norm of that culture. She found that there was a correlation between the individual's traits and those of his society. Two of the tribes surveyed, the Zuni and the Kwakiutl, were diametrically opposed in temperament. The Zuni, who exhibited restraint in all of their social institutions, were of an easy-going, unemotional personality type. The Kwakiutl, on the other hand, gloried in excess. Their personality norm was a highly neurotic and highly temperamental individual.³ This study opens up new fields in the social sciences. Not only does it show the great adaptability of the human species, but it gives us cause to ponder our own society.⁴

1 J. R. Kantor, "An Essay Toward an Institutional Conception of Social Psychology," American Journal of Sociology, XXVII, 1922 pp. 624.

2 Gary, op. cit., pp. 178-180.

3 Benedict, passim.

4 Linton, op. cit., pp. 501-502.

The culture concept and the cultural anthropologists have aided in applying a more objective approach to the study of social phenomena. They have done this by their insistence upon the objectivity of culture. They stress that social phenomena are caused, not by some abstract law, but by other social phenomena. Since primitive man did not select the phenomena which were incorporated into his culture with a long-range view, but in order to satisfy basic needs of the moment, any attempt to read rationality into his actions is hopeless. This is the shortcoming of such theories as that of the "Social Contract" upon which much of our current thought is based.¹ To attempt to probe into the secrets of society, then, one must deal with specific responses to specific stimuli.²

Persons who interpret society through the individual are at fault, also, in that it is not the individual himself who is significant but the processes and interaction of which he is a part. Clark Wissler says,

"... professionals in social science are still far from confident that they have their hands upon the social reality. True, many attempts have been made to find the basic factors in society, but these factors have been sought, for the most part, in the laboratories of biology and psychology . . . On the other hand, experience with social phenomena is bringing us nearer and nearer to a realization that we must deal directly with life itself, that the realities of social science are what people do."³

1 Chase, op. cit., p. 199.

2 Kantor, op. cit., p. 772.

3 Clark Wissler, Preface to Middletown, by Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929, p. v.

With the realization that arm-chair theorizing is no longer the answer to a knowledge of mankind, American sociologists and anthropologists have come out of their "ivory towers" to observe that which actually exists. They have come to realize, that not only do primitive peoples have a culture, but that we ourselves do, and that it is necessary to study this culture to find what makes it "tick."¹ Anthropological studies of our way of life are appearing in increasing quantities. Among those that have been published are the Lynd's Middletown, West's Plainesville, U. S. A., Blumenthal's Small Town Stuff, Hicks' Small Town, and Anderson's Home Town, the Face of America.

The data collected by the anthropologists in their research on primitive tribes has been of great use to the social scientists. It has furnished a basis for comparison to highlight the features of civilized culture. The data for the most part had been collected with more emphasis upon oddities than on the culture pattern of the tribe as a whole. As Ralph Linton says,

"... until very recent times, facts of this sort have been collected in a spirit much the same as that of the amateur collector of Indian relics. The customs of non-European groups were treated as curios with which to astonish the uninformed, and the rarer and more bizarre they were the greater the pride of the discoverer."²

and

"Writers of this period always took the customs of their own society for granted, and even fifty years ago the description of a modern European culture pattern, unless it was that of some isolated peasant community, would have

1 Chase, op. cit., p. 122.

2 Linton, op. cit., p. 29.

been considered as much out of place in an ethnographic treatise as a kitchen knife in a cabinet full of arrowheads."¹

By showing how institutions of the primitive tribes grow and change in the process, we come to have an idea of what our own civilization must have been like in its early stages, and we can learn to some degree what the possibilities are that it can be changed to ameliorate some of the conditions we believe to be harmful. Culture does change, although very slowly. This, itself, is a safeguard for society, since it protects the members from impractical schemes which might result in disaster if, overnight, great innovations were made, but it also demands of all those who hope for better things, a great deal of patience and a necessity to realize that "No reform can ever bear fruit unless it is grafted successfully to the living tree of culture."²

In addition to the effects the culture concept has had on the social sciences in general, we might list a few of the more specific ways in which it affects them. In sociology the concept has been widely accepted and has done much to direct attention from the formulation of absolute social laws to the study of things as they actually exist. In economics it has suggested that economic change is only one among many types of social change³ and that no culture exists for very long at the "stark survival level" or is prompted by a purely materialistic philosophy. This would make the "Economic Man" of the classical

1 Ibid., p. 29.

2 Chase, op. cit., p. 66.

3 R. M. McIver, "Sociology", Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, XXIV, New York, MacMillan Company, 1934, p. 242.

economists a fallacy.¹ One of the contributions to ethics has been to show there is no set of behavior patterns which are everywhere "right" or everywhere "wrong"; although each society has morals, the things which they encourage or forbid differ from culture to culture.²

Political science is affected since analysis of cultures show the state to be a social creation responsive to social demands,³ and wherever there is "tribe feeling" it is possible for almost any type of government to exist.⁴ In world government it suggests that no one form of government can be imposed on all peoples, because their cultures differ so widely as to make it impossible,⁵ and in law, that individuals are not always responsible for their acts. It has contributed to history by giving a framework for viewing facts in relation to other facts and helping the historian to realize his assumptions and state them in terms of the values his society holds at the time. In addition it gives tools with which to approach the study of society.⁶ In the study of psychology it emphasizes the part the society plays in shaping the individual,⁷ and an approach to the study of the individual in relation to the norms of the society.⁸ To social psychology it

1 Chase, op. cit., pp. 82, 83, 195.

2 Durkheim, op. cit., p. 398.

3 MoIver, op. cit., p. 242.

4 Chase, op. cit., p. 84, 85.

5 Ibid., p. 275.

6 Caroline F. Ware, The Cultural Approach to History, New York Columbia University Press, 1940, pp. 11, 12, 93.

7 Linton, Cultural Background of Personality, pp. 29-30.

8 Chase, op. cit., p. 63.

says that man is neither rational or irrational and that we cannot deal with "such an entity as man at all, but rather must consider specific individuals under specific circumstances."¹ The use of the culture construct (Linton's group norm) makes it possible to predict behavior with a high degree of success.²

These are but a few of the many ways, some much more subtle, in which the culture concept has brought new ideas to the social sciences and helped to bring knowledge of the super-organic portion of society more nearly into accord with that of the organic and inorganic. The culture concept is but one of many inventions which may aid in accomplishing this. That it has definitely helped to accomplish it seems certain.

1 Kanter, op. cit., p. 777.

2 Linton, op. cit., p. 46.

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